

DECATUR TOWNSHIP PLANNING AREA

CRITICAL AREA TEXT

Critical Area 1

Location: I-465 Interchange at Mann Road

Why Critical: The half interchange of Interstate 465 and Mann Road generates a high volume of traffic along Mann Road and Thompson Road. There are no plans at this time to make the half interchange at I-465 and Mann Road fully directional. Mann Road is a primary arterial that is slated in the Regional Transportation Plan to be widened from two lanes to four lanes sometime between 2021 and 2025. Future traffic volumes will make this intersection attractive to additional commercial development; however, large portions of this critical area are undeveloped and environmentally sensitive, including the area immediately north of the interchange. The White River and its floodway and floodplain run along the eastern portion of the critical area. Present also are natural woodlands, wetlands and slopes greater than ten percent. It is critical to maintain the environmental qualities of the area. The levee in this area is a privately owned former agricultural levee that is not recognized by the Federal Emergency Management Agency as providing any level of acceptable flood protection for the surrounding areas.

Recommendations:

- Commercial development should be limited to the areas designated on the map in order to protect neighborhoods to the north and south along Mann Road and to protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- Existing commercial areas should provide buffering for adjacent residential areas.
- The parcel at 4814 Mann Road has woodlands and steep slopes on the eastern and northern portions of the site. Development on this parcel should be clustered toward the back portion of the parcel in order to protect the environmentally sensitive areas. The slopes should be minimally developed, if at all, so that they may retain their forest cover and avoid soil erosion. Clustering the recommended 1.75 to 3.5 residential units per acre onto the back portion of the site is likely to result in a density on the back portion similar to the development immediately to the north.
- The wooded areas designated as environmentally sensitive should be preserved to the greatest extent possible.
- No development should occur in the wetlands or floodway. Wetlands contribute to stream water quality by holding and filtering storm water.
- Maintain and enhance the dense vegetation cover along State Ditch and its tributaries. Cooling of stream water helps maintain good water quality.
- The portion of the critical area east of Foltz Street should be minimally developed, if at all, due to lack of adequate flood protection. The plan recommends park usage, either public or private, for this area.
- Development within the floodplain should not contribute to flooding or diminished water quality.
- Acquire additional parkland as shown on the Land Use Maps. Protect the stream channel and preserve the natural woodlands

- The right-of-way for the White River Greenway, as proposed in the Indianapolis Greenways Plan, should be preserved.
- Clustering should be encouraged in the area of proposed residential density east of Mann Road, north of I-465, and west of State Ditch, due to the environmentally sensitive areas and steep slopes, and to minimize the development of flood-prone area. While multi-story clustering is acceptable, it is recommended that care be taken not to allow a building height of greater than 35 feet and a gross density for the acreage of 3.5 units per acre.

Critical Area 2

Location: South side of Kentucky Avenue, northeast of the I-465 interchange.

Why critical: Kentucky Avenue is a major thoroughfare in Decatur Township. The south side of the arterial is residential, except for the six parcels adjacent to the interchange. These six parcels are currently commercially zoned. The residential area adjacent to these parcels will be under pressure to convert to commercial uses. It is critical to the stability of the surrounding neighborhoods that this area remains residential.

Recommendations:

- Restrict further commercial development as shown on the land use map. It is not appropriate to allow commercial encroachment on the surrounding residential areas.
- Prohibit the conversion of homes to commercial uses, as any conversion would set a precedent that may set off a chain reaction of further conversions.
- Kentucky Avenue shall be the primary access to the parcels that are currently commercially zoned. Traffic should not intrude into the adjacent neighborhood.
- Commercial areas should provide buffering for adjacent residential areas.
- Develop a pedestrian/bicycle pathway along Kentucky Avenue. There is a proposal for an off-road bike lane on Kentucky Avenue along the edge of this Critical Area, as shown in the Regional Pedestrian Plan and the Regional Bicycle Plan in Decatur Township.

Critical Area 3

Location: Vicinity of Valley Mills

Why critical: This area includes several types of residential development, and is generally surrounded by institutional uses, industrially-zoned land, and proposed commercial and industrial uses. It is critical that context-sensitive development be achieved on individual commercial and industrial sites bordering the residential areas.

New residential use is specifically discouraged north of Kentucky Avenue, based on proximity to the airport, as are new uses featuring congregation of persons or storage of petroleum-based materials. To the northeast and southwest of Valley Mills, outside the boundaries of the approved Ameriplex land use plan, office commercial uses are the most appropriate land use.

Considerable non-residential traffic flows from Kentucky Avenue to Decatur Boulevard via Valley Mills Avenue and Kollman Road. This traffic is too intense for the narrow, residential streets. Quality of life in the residential portions of this Critical Area can also be improved by provision of access to walking trails or linear parkways. However, traffic on Kentucky Avenue and Decatur Boulevard is a substantial barrier for connections to proposed parkways from this Critical Area.

Recommendations:

- Require substantial landscaping along common property lines between Ameriplex sites and immediately adjacent residential properties. Installation of such required screening should be carefully monitored during construction.
- Strongly discourage new noise-incompatible land uses (such as residential) in the area north of Kentucky Avenue, along with activities which may feature storage of petroleum-based material, and those which may feature congregations of persons.
- Establish lighter commercial uses north of Kentucky Avenue and immediately adjacent to Valley Mills on its east, south, and southwest sides.
- Discourage additional through-traffic using Valley Mills Avenue and Kollman Road by prohibiting destination-type uses on lots north and west of Valley Mills.
- Seek the continuation and expansion of the Ameriplex pedestrian trail system on developing Ameriplex property and access by isolated adjacent residential areas to the existing and future portions of the system.

Critical Area 4

Location: Vicinity of Camby, northwest of Kentucky Avenue

Why critical: The village of Camby may expect dramatic changes in surrounding land use in the foreseeable future due to three developments:

1. an anticipated future runway for Indianapolis International Airport south of I-70;
2. the construction of Ameriplex Parkway, completed in 2005; and
3. future office and industrial land use development on land surrounding Camby on the west, north, and east.

While the portion of Camby northwest of Kentucky Avenue is large enough that these events will not likely threaten its cohesiveness during this Comprehensive Plan period, inappropriate land uses established adjacent to the village's outermost lots could have negative effects on residential uses. The Community Values Component of this Comprehensive Plan seeks to "discourage or prevent the encroachment of incompatible uses into each other." It is critical to buffer the residential portions of Camby from the more intense uses surrounding it. It is also critical to direct commercial traffic away from Camby's residential streets.

North of Camby, the existence of environmental features can serve a dual purpose. Given the possibility of linking a linear park along Flynn Creek to a similar linear park along the east fork of White Lick Creek in Hendricks County, it is wise to take advantage of the opportunity to

preserve wetland and woodland north of Camby. This preserved area would also serve as a land use buffer between the residential uses of Camby and proposed industrial uses to the north.

The unique character of the airport in proximity to residential areas requires considerations not present in other areas of the township. Federal regulations regarding noise abatement and height restrictions dictate land use to some extent. It is also prudent to limit areas of congregation and areas of petroleum-related uses near flight paths.

With its Airport Related Mixed Use designation, varying combinations of retail, office and industrial uses might be developed in the area enclosed by I-70, Ameriplex Parkway and the proposed third runway. However, the roads in this area, including the newly constructed Ameriplex Parkway, were designed for a certain volume of traffic. It is critical that the land use mix in this area does not overburden the road system.

Recommendations:

- Prohibit heavy industrial uses within 250 feet of Flynn Creek, between Stanley Road and Flynn Road, by designation of a linear park along the creek's length, incorporating wetland area on the west side of Flynn Road.
- Protect wetland and high-quality woodland west of Camby by designating this environmentally sensitive area for its current low-density residential uses, but strongly discourage any new such noise-incompatible uses north of Kentucky Avenue.
- Specify office commercial uses immediately adjacent to Camby's northwest side to serve as a buffer from anticipated industrial uses shown for the extreme western portion of the Ameriplex plan.
- Buffering of the Light Industrial land east of Camby from the existing residential uses should take the form of on-site mounding, landscaping, and/or fencing.
- Strongly discourage activities that may feature storage of petroleum-based material, and those that may feature congregations of persons, in the area north of Kentucky Avenue near Camby.
- Encourage disbursement of higher traffic-generating uses north of Ameriplex Parkway, south of I-70, and west of Flynn Road. An overall land use mix in this area should not generate traffic levels greater than that anticipated by the approved Ameriplex development plan and the design standards of Ameriplex Parkway and the I-70 interchange, unless improvements to the capacity of these roadways are made.
- An updated traffic analysis should accompany any major proposed change to the commercial and industrial land uses in this area, whether in amount, location or concentration.
- Prohibit direct access to Ratliff Road from the industrial/commercial properties to the east.
- Review of site plans accompanying land use petitions for this area should be sensitive to the possibility of adverse traffic impact on Camby streets. This is particularly important in the area proposed as "Linear Park," in the event that such a park cannot be established. To this end, efforts should be directed at prohibiting or discouraging future curb cuts onto the portion of Flynn Road between Stanley Road and Trotter Road.

Critical Area 5

Location: Vicinity of the Ameriplex Parkway/Kentucky Avenue interchange

Why critical: Significant traffic is expected at the Ameriplex Parkway/Kentucky Avenue intersection. The traffic situation at this intersection is complicated by the railroad that parallels Kentucky Avenue. An interchange that bridges Kentucky Avenue and the railroad is proposed for good traffic flow and safety when warranted by traffic counts. It is critical that adequate right-of-way for this new interchange be preserved. A continuation of Ameriplex Parkway to Camby Road will team with the proposed Southport Road/Camby Road connector to create a major cross-county arterial. It is critical that adequate right-of-way for this new road be preserved. Conversion to Community Commercial uses for a number of residential properties that front Kentucky Avenue between Milhouse Road and the new interchange has been recommended. A residential density of 8 to 15 units per acre has been recommended for the area south and east of the residential properties described above. To maintain the quiet character of Mendenhall Road, it is critical that this area not be accessed from Mendenhall Road. It is critical that land use change in this area not occur in a piecemeal manner.

There is some unusual importance attached to the area of residential density shown within the Ameriplex Parkway/Kentucky Avenue ramp rights-of-way. Because the proposed Ameriplex Parkway/Kentucky Avenue interchange is not currently a City or State right-of-way, land use recommendations have been shown within this interchange site. However, the proposed interchange is also shown on the map to indicate its likely future construction. Dedication of right-of-way for this interchange would negate the land use recommendation shown within the dedicated area. It is not the intention of this plan that this land use density be added elsewhere.

Portions of Goose Creek and its tributaries are found in this Critical Area. Wetlands, ponds and high quality woodlands are associated with these streams. It is critical to maintain the environmental qualities of the area. A row of existing residential properties exists on the south side of Camby Road along the southern boundary of this Critical Area. It is critical that these residential properties be adequately buffered from the Regional Commercial area proposed along Kentucky Avenue north of Camby Road.

Recommendations:

- Preserve the right-of-way for the Ameriplex Parkway/Kentucky Avenue interchange and the Ameriplex Parkway/Camby Road Connector.
- For purposes of traffic safety and good urban design, conversion of residential properties along Kentucky Avenue to commercial uses should be done in an integrated manner to limit curb cuts and sign clutter.
- Access to the area recommended for 8 to 15 residential units per acre should be from Kentucky Avenue and should not be from Mendenhall Road.
- The wooded areas designated as environmentally sensitive should be preserved to the greatest extent possible.
- No development should occur in the wetlands.

Critical Area 6

Location: West Newton

Why critical: Founded in 1851, West Newton is the most distinct historic town in Decatur Township. To maintain West Newton's identity, it has been designated as Village Mixed Use. To retain the character of West Newton, it is critical to protect the current development patterns (mix of uses; size, shape and location of buildings on their sites; and typical street widths and grid pattern). For example, along the portion of Mendenhall Road angling northwest from West Newton, the average front setback measures 23.5 feet. In contrast, the average front setback along Pearl Street and interior streets measures just 10.5 feet. The town contains historic homes, churches and institutional buildings. It is critical that these be preserved. West Newton is surrounded on the north, east and south by streams with their associated floodplains, steep slopes, woodlands and several small wetlands. It is critical to maintain the environmental qualities of the area. Parkland in Marion County is not now sufficient to accommodate the future population. Although Griffin Woods, a steeply sloped wooded Decatur Township site, was recently bequeathed to the City as a park, it is critical to acquire additional parkland as shown on the Land Use Maps. A new section of roadway is planned to extend Paddock Road north to Mendenhall Road. This will direct through- traffic away from the narrow streets and sharps turns within West Newton. It is critical that adequate right-of-way for this new road be preserved.

Recommendations:

- Restrict encroachment of commercial uses in the solidly residential areas of West Newton as shown on the Critical Area map.
- Future development within the Critical Area should reflect the existing development patterns such as setbacks, lot sizes, building orientation, roofline, and size of buildings. Two story structures with retailing and offices on the first floor with residences or offices above may be appropriate in the mixed use areas of the village provided they fit in with the scale of surrounding structures.
- Following the development patterns of the historic village should not relieve new commercial or institutional development from meeting parking standards. However, parking for new development should not intrude on the streetscape.
- New streets should follow the modified grid pattern and street widths of the current village. A direct connection between "Main Street West Newton" (the east-west portion of Mooresville Road) and the Paddock Road extension should not be constructed, as such a connection may encourage cut-through traffic.
- Historic structures within the town should be preserved.
- Pedestrian connectivity within the village mixed use area west of the historic village should be established by the construction and upkeep of sidewalks and safe street crossings. Safe and convenient pedestrian connectivity along the major streets of the historic village to Griffin Woods Park, the West Newton School and the school's playground should also be established.
- New commercial development or redevelopment of commercial properties should include clear, safe access for pedestrians. Drive-through establishments would not be appropriate.
- Greenways and linear parks should be established along Goose Creek and Lake Creek with the goal of eventual connection to Southwestway Park.

- The wooded areas designated as environmentally sensitive should be preserved to the extent possible.
- No development should occur in the wetlands or floodway. Development in the floodplain should not contribute to flooding or diminished water quality.
- Steep slopes should be minimally developed, if at all, to retain vegetative cover and minimize erosion.
- Acquire additional parkland as shown on the Land Use Maps.
- Maintain and enhance the dense vegetation cover along Goose Creek, Lake Creek and their tributaries. Cooling of stream water helps maintain good water quality.
- Preserve the right-of-way for the proposed Camby Road/Southport Road Connector.

Critical Area 7

Location: Vicinity of the intersection of Southport Road and Mann Road extending to the White River

Why critical: This area is partially developed with low density residences. Mann Road is a primary arterial with an interchange on I-465. It is slated in the Regional Transportation Plan to be widened from two to four lanes sometime between 2021 and 2025. The portion of Southport Road east of Mann Road is also scheduled to be widened from two lanes to four lanes between 2021 and 2025. A new section of roadway is planned to connect Camby Road with the eastern leg of Southport Road. Once built, this will create a major cross-county arterial. It is critical that adequate right-of-way for this new road be preserved. Future traffic volumes will make this intersection attractive to commercial development.

It is critical that an appropriate level of commercial activity not be exceeded or encroach on established neighborhoods or environmentally sensitive areas. The leg of Southport Road west of Mann Road is not scheduled for widening. The White River forms the eastern boundary of this Critical Area and Mann Creek and its tributaries arc through it. There are floodways, floodplains, steep slopes, wetlands and high quality woodland associated with the river and streams. It is critical to maintain the environmental qualities of the area.

A greenway is proposed along the White River in the Indianapolis Greenways Plan. Another greenway proposed in that plan is along Little Buck Creek, which enters White River from the east near Southport Road. This intersection is the location of the early town of Antrim. The historic Antrim School is the only remaining building. A National Register of Historic Places home was moved to the northwest corner of Mann Road and the west leg of Southport Road. The home has subsequently been renovated. Two other historic properties are found here (6925 and 7135 Mann Road). It is critical for new development to respect the remaining historic qualities of the area.

A major expansion of Southwestway Park has recently extended the park to Southport Road. Southwestway Park is a mixture of natural areas and active play areas. Large portions of the park are notable as wildlife habitat. It is critical that the natural qualities of the park be preserved. It is also critical that safe and convenient pedestrian access to the park be created from the

neighborhoods to the west and north. Parkland in Marion County is not now sufficient to accommodate the future population. It is critical to acquire additional parkland as shown on the Land Use Map.

Recommendations:

- Preserve the right-of-way for the proposed Camby Road/Southport Road Connector.
- Restrict commercial development as shown on the land use map. It is not appropriate to allow commercial encroachment on the surrounding residential areas. Commercial development south of Southport Road and the proposed connector to Camby Road should be restricted to office uses to provide a buffer between the large commercial retail area to the north and the park and the homes to south and west. Signs and lighting should be oriented away from the park. A 100' wide greenway buffer, open to the public, is proposed between the office commercial area and the historic home at Mann and Southport roads. Any auto-related uses should be restricted to the north side of the proposed Camby Road/Southport Road connector.
- The wooded areas designated as environmentally sensitive should be preserved to the greatest extent possible.
- No development should occur in the wetlands or floodway. Development in the floodplain should not contribute to flooding or diminished water quality.
- Steep slopes should be minimally developed, if at all, to retain forest cover and minimize erosion.
- The former Antrim School (7041 Mann Road), the Nicholson Rand House (corner of Southport Road and Mann Road) and other historic structures in the Critical Area should be preserved.
- Acquire additional parkland as shown on the Land Use Map.
- Pedestrian connectivity among Southwestway Park, the proposed park on Mann Creek and the surrounding neighborhoods should be established by the construction and upkeep of sidewalks, recreation pathways and safe street crossings. A wide, pedestrian-friendly sidewalk or pathway along both sides of the proposed Southport Road/Camby Road connector should be established.
- The right-of-way for the White River Greenway, as proposed in the Indianapolis Greenways Plan, should be preserved. The White River Greenway should be constructed, maintained and connected to the Little Buck Greenway on the east bank as well as the various greenways and linear parks on the west bank.

Critical Area 8

Location: The 7500 through 7800 blocks of Milhouse Road.

Why critical: This portion of Milhouse Road no longer connects to Kentucky Avenue. The remaining residential properties are now accessible only through Ameriplex. This plan does not anticipate that these properties will remain residential in perpetuity. Instead this plan accommodates their eventual conversion to industrial uses to match Ameriplex's proposed industrial development. However, given the manner of their access, it is more critical that the reuse of the residential lots is compatible with the surrounding parcels than it is that they be

redeveloped industrially. The upper reaches of Goose Creek flow through this area. The creek has a history of erosion and overflowing. It is critical that future development does not increase these problems.

Recommendations:

- Redevelopment of the residential properties in the 7500 through 7800 blocks of Milhouse Road should be compatible with, and if appropriate, integrated with the development of the parcels surrounding them.
- Development in proximity to the stream should not contribute to flooding, erosion or diminished water quality. Development should strive to mitigate existing flooding, drainage and water quality problems.
- Require substantial landscaping along common property lines between Ameriplex sites and immediately adjacent residential properties. Buffering from the existing residential uses along Milhouse Road should take the form of on-site mounding, landscaping, and/or fencing. Installation of such required screening should be carefully monitored during construction.
- Due to the proximity of existing residential uses to on-going construction on surrounding commercial and industrial property, the MDC is encouraged to consider imposition of specific conditions on rezoning, Special Exceptions, and variances that would protect these residential uses. Examples could include requiring a lighting plan, requiring specific timing on installation of landscaping, or requiring notification of the start of construction be sent to adjacent landowners.